

unlike the Commons, the clergy seldom withheld the grant in order to bring forward grievances. They knew that the Church was so unpopular and her riches so envied, that they must consent to heavy taxation as the only alternative to wholesale confiscation. But in this one Parliament of February 1377, the popular sympathy was so strongly with them in their resistance to the common enemy, John of Gaunt, that they took the unusual step of refusing supplies till grievances were redressed. The grievance that especially concerned the Church was the persecution of William, of Wykeham. The Bishops positively refused to proceed with business till he appeared among them. Although he had received a summons to Convocation, he had been prohibited by the King from coming to London, an injunction which he could not venture to disobey without special orders from the Primate. To issue such a mandate in the face of the royal authority and the displeasure of the Lancastrian party was the last thing that Sudbury would have done if left to himself, but such pressure was put upon him by Courtonay, backed by the other Bishops, that he finally consented to summon Wykeham, in order that the proceedings might begin. The late comer was received among his colleagues with every sign of respect and rejoicing, and a petition was sent up by Convocation remonstrating against the usage he had received. The cry of the populace was still that he had not had a full trial, a complaint which was partly admitted by his adversaries when the King promised him a day in the Hilary term on which his case should be again heard.¹ Unfortunately the promise was never kept, and a curtain of doubt must hang for ever round the conduct of this famous man.

Encouraged by this success, the Bishops took another step, which amounted in its political aspect to a defiance of John of Gaunt. They summoned John Wycliffe to appear before them at St. Paul's to answer the charge of heresy.

The Pope had no hand in this first attack on his great enemy.² The English Bishops were acting entirely on their own initiative, to defend the Church in England against a

¹ St., ii. 458, note 5; F&G, ill. 1069; Chfon.
Aug., 114, &OL
ii. 873, sec. 85.

» See Ap.